

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011**

**SESSION LAW 2011-259
HOUSE BILL 822**

AN ACT DIRECTING THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT A
DROPOUT RECOVERY PILOT PROGRAM.

Whereas, dropout rates continue to plague North Carolina, limiting career opportunities for dropouts and costing the State billions of dollars in lost wages; and

Whereas, high school dropouts are more likely to be incarcerated and more likely to need social welfare assistance; and

Whereas, the traditional path to a complete high school education is not for everyone; and

Whereas, many students perform best in nontraditional settings, and many students have family and employment obligations that hinder them from following the traditional route to a diploma; and

Whereas, these students require flexibility in terms of scheduling and content delivery; and

Whereas, there is also a need to close the gap in the graduation rates between minority students and white students; and

Whereas, it would be more efficient for North Carolina to reengage students across the State by implementing a statewide pilot program with an initial focus on the districts of highest need to allow the program to be effectively monitored prior to a statewide implementation; and

Whereas, North Carolina can implement such a program without additional taxes or appropriations; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. The State Board of Education shall implement a three-year Dropout Recovery Pilot Program in New Hanover County Schools and three other local school administrative units selected by the State Board of Education. The purpose of the pilot program is to reengage students and increase the graduation rates in North Carolina through an educational program that provides flexible scheduling and a blended learning environment with individualized and self-paced learning options.

SECTION 2. Under the pilot program, the educational services and programming shall be provided by an education partner that is a nonprofit or for-profit entity approved by the State Board of Education. The local school administrative unit shall be responsible for reporting enrollment to the Department of Public Instruction, working with the education partner to align graduation requirements, and issuing diplomas to those students in the program who complete the necessary graduation requirements.

SECTION 3. The pilot program shall provide the following:

- (1) Facilities that are easily accessible to the students being served.
- (2) Flexible scheduling, including at least two different program schedules.
- (3) Differentiated instruction that shall include individualized, group, and online instructional components.



- (4) The capacity for assessing, recording, and responding to the students' academic progress on a daily basis using assessments that are aligned with State and local standards and requirements.

SECTION 4. Before the State Board of Education approves an applicant as an education partner, the applicant must demonstrate the following:

- (1) A history providing dropout recovery services to high school students in charter or noncharter public schools.
- (2) At least two years of relevant experience operating and providing services to brick-and-mortar public schools.
- (3) At least two years of relevant experience providing comprehensive online learning programs.
- (4) Relevant experience serving diverse student populations, including socioeconomically disadvantaged students.
- (5) An explanation of the steps taken by the applicant to ensure that its proposed instructional content is aligned with State standards.
- (6) A plan for the recruitment and hiring of State-certified teachers, including hiring criteria.
- (7) A plan for the recruitment and hiring of qualified administrators, including hiring criteria.
- (8) A detailed description of the applicant's plan to work with the participating local school administrative units and the State Board of Education to identify students who need to be served, to reengage those students, and to provide alternative education options for students at risk of dropping out. Students at risk of dropping out from their current schools may be transferred into the pilot program.
- (9) An operational plan that includes the following:
 - a. The number and physical location of proposed sites and a list of the equipment required.
 - b. A proposed program calendar and daily schedule and an explanation of how the calendar and schedule meet the needs of prospective students. The schedule must include at least four hours per school day of on-site learning at a physical location.
 - c. The student-to-teacher ratio.
 - d. A description of each of the instructional methods to be used and number of hours per day for each method.
 - e. A plan for differentiated instruction that must include individualized, group, and online instructional components.
 - f. Capacity for assessing, recording, and responding to students' academic progress on a daily basis using standards-aligned assessments.
 - g. A detailed one-year budget.
 - h. A system of competency-based credit.
 - i. A plan for aggregation and reporting of student performance data and reporting of financial activity.

SECTION 5. Data and student performance results shall be collected and compiled from the pilot program and the participating local school administrative units. By implementing a uniform statewide pilot program, the success of the pilot program as a whole can be measured by the State Board of Education. In an effort to provide services to students for the 2011-2012 school year, if a request for proposals is necessary, the process shall be completed within 60 days of the effective date of the legislation.

SECTION 6. A student attending the pilot program shall be enrolled as a student of the resident local school administrative unit. The student shall be included in the ADM of that unit. The resident local school administrative unit shall retain five percent (5%) of the total per pupil funding for the student to cover administrative costs and shall remit payment to the education partner of the remaining ninety-five percent (95%) within 15 days of receiving payment from the Department of Public Instruction.

SECTION 7. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the State Board of Education shall authorize participating local school administrative units to implement flexible attendance requirements for students participating in the pilot program due to the flexible scheduling and online portions of the pilot program.

SECTION 8. The pilot program shall be operated through the State Board of Education or as a program of the contracting school administrative unit. The pilot program may be an alternative school.

SECTION 9. This act becomes effective July 1, 2011.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 16th day of June, 2011.

s/ Walter H. Dalton
President of the Senate

s/ Thom Tillis
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Beverly E. Perdue
Governor

Approved 1:54 p.m. this 23rd day of June, 2011